

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

U.S. Neglects Opportunity in Red Rift

CPYRGHT By Drew Pearson

American newspaper editors at the end of 1959 voted that the biggest story of the year was the meeting between President Eisenhower and Nikita Khrushchev at Camp David.

Editors at the end of this year may well vote that the biggest story of 1966 was the definite break between the



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world's two greatest Communist powers, Russia and Red China, as further evidenced by the prolonged street demonstrations against the Russian Embassy in Peking.

Most people, however, will not realize that the big story of 1959—the meeting between Khrushchev and Eisenhower—had a direct bearing on the big story of 1966.

However, this was the fact. The United States, plus Khrushchev, had more to do with the break between China and Russia than any other single factor. Having inspired it, however, we have done absolutely nothing to cash in on it. We have sat on the sidelines, twiddling our thumbs, the eyes of our diplomats glued glassily on the spectacle of Russian-Chinese friction as if they couldn't believe it.

Mao's Secret Boast

The story begins at the secret Moscow conference of Communist powers in 1957. At that time Russia and Red China were bosom pals. But Mao Tse-tung, in a boastful, expansive mood, got off a statement which shook his Russian comrades to the bottom of their then complacent partnership. Mao said that China was the only nation in the world which could withstand the terrible losses of atomic war, since it would come out of such a war with 300 million people left.

The Russians were too stunned to repeat Mao's remark. But Tito of Yugoslavia, the old independent, was at the meeting, and he leaked it to the outside world. Later Western diplomats confirmed the remark with Russian sources and learned the aftermath.

The Russians at that time had just developed their first Sputnik, were on the verge of other great space achievements. They determined not to give any of these secrets to the Chinese, especially not the secret of the A-bomb. If a nation was willing to face a loss of 300 million people out of its total 600 million population, then it was not to be trusted with nuclear secrets.

It was about a year after this—1958—that Khrushchev decided that the only way to prevent the horrors of nuclear

war was an agreement, sort of nuclear partnership with the United States. To consummate it, he proposed going to the U.N. General Assembly meeting of 1958.

When the Chinese heard about it, however, they raised such a furor inside the secret councils of communism that Khrushchev hesitated, finally called off the trip. He had planned to go only to New York, which he had a right to do as a U.N. member. He had no invitation to go to Washington, and did not get one until a year later when John Foster Dulles died and President Eisenhower began following his own personal dictates regarding peace.

Then the U-2 Case

Khrushchev's problem was that he got almost no response from the West—and this eventually proved to be his undoing. Though Eisenhower liked him, the men around Ike managed to pull the rug out from under better U.S.-U.S.S.R. cooperation with the famous U-2 incident just before the Paris summit conference.

And the Premier got no cooperation whatsoever at first from young Mr. Kennedy, who ignored Khrushchev's impassioned plea for better understanding at the time of his inauguration. Later, much later, after both men had learned the hard way that they could not intimidate each

other, Kennedy and Khrushchev signed the Nuclear Test Ban Pact and began to improve relations. It was at this point that President Kennedy was assassinated.

Relations continued to improve at first under President Johnson—until after he defeated Barry Goldwater and adopted the Goldwater policy of bombing North Vietnam and the war's escalation. Since then relations have retrograded, with the Chinese continually taunting the Russians: "You see coexistence doesn't work. You can't possibly get along with those imperialist Americans."

Mr. K Goes to Peking

One of the agreements which he and Khrushchev worked out at Camp David was that Khrushchev would fly to Peking to urge the Chinese to ease tension in the Formosan Straits.

Khrushchev took the trip immediately. He rested only two days in Moscow before flying to Peking. There he had one of the stormiest arguments with Mao in the history of communism. It marked the real end of the Chinese-Russian alliance.

It was later that year that the Russians began pulling long trainloads of their advisers and their foreign aid out of China, a blow which the Chinese have never forgotten and never forgiven.

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